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Focus

DONALD ALLCHIN

There can be no doubt about the fact that we are living at an intensely interesting moment in the history of Christendom. This number of PRISM is devoted to the question of Christian unity, and one of the things which emerges from the various articles in it, is that something quite new is happening, something which has no exact parallel in the two thousand years of the Church's history. In the past the story of the growth of our faith has for the most part been the story of constantly spreading divisions, a continual tendency to schism. It is true that from time to time men have longed for unity and sought for ways to promote it. But never before has there been such a universal desire, so many convergent attempts to rediscover the unity of all Christian people as Our Lord himself willed and wills it. After centuries of digging into prepared positions, Catholics and Protestants alike are emerging from their fortifications, and hailing one another as brethren across the no-man's land.

As these lines are being written the Archbishop of Canterbury is on his journey via Jerusalem and Constantinople to Rome. We have been told time and again not to expect too much from these meetings, that the journey is in itself a small thing, that the subjects for discussion must be mostly trivial. All this may be true. But as the Archbishop himself has pointed out, the fact that such meetings are taking place is not trivial. Rather it symbolises a great change in the attitude of separated Christians towards one another, a change which has been taking place quietly over the last fifty years, and is now just beginning to catch the attention of the general public.

What is the character of this change? It is as if suddenly the dry bones of separated, divided Christendom were coming together again in new life and new understanding. Out of death, new life is coming to birth.

"The frozen misery
Of centuries breaks, cracks, begins to move;
The thunder is the thunder of the floes,
The thaw, the flood, the upstart Spring."

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For centuries Christians have lived in ignorance of one another, suspecting one another, despising one another. The different traditions within Christendom have hardened into rigidity and isolation. Different aspects of the same truth, different experiences of the same life have been held apart in artificial separation.

Can there be any wonder that our divided Christendom has made so poor an impression on the outside world? Can there be any wonder that now when things which have been held apart, and never should have been held apart, are coming together again, the whole body should feel the impulse of a new energy of life?

To give but two most obvious examples, the one from the sphere of worship, the other from that of doctrine. For more than three hundred years it was commonly agreed that there were two types of Christian worship, the one sacramental, Catholic and centred on the Eucharist, the other the ministry of the Word, Protestant and centred on the sermon. What is more it was assumed that these two forms of worship were in practice antithetical and mutually exclusive. There were some perhaps who tried to combine a little of one with the other. Preaching never died out in Catholicism, the Lord's Supper never ceased altogether to be celebrated in Protestantism. But by and large the distinction was absolute. There were many who thought that it was of the essence of Catholic worship that the prayers should be inaudible and unintelligible, so that the element of the Word should be banished from the service, and only the mystery and the symbolism be retained. There were as many on the other side who thought that Protestant worship should consist, apart from hymn singing, of nothing except the bare hearing of the Word.

At the present time what do we find? Everywhere in Christendom, both in theory and in practice, the two halves of the Church's worship are coming together again. More and more clearly is it being recognised by Protestants that the life of the Church, and of each member of the Church, is grounded and renewed in those two mysterious actions which Our Lord has given us, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. More and more frequently is it becoming not only the ideal but the practice that the main act of worship of the Christian congregation, Sunday by Sunday, should be the Eucharistic Communion, the great thanksgiving, in which, both in Word and Sacrament, the Church renews its unity and draws new life from its

risen Lord. From the Catholic side, a convergent move has taken place. The element of the Word, in preaching, in lessons from the Bible, in intelligibility and in congregational participation is everywhere being rediscovered. The stiff and archaic gestures of the Mass are becoming supple and expressive again. The hidden, cramped ceremonies have been opened out, re-ordered and explained. In the practice of celebrating facing the people, the sacrament or mystery has regained its true and Biblical meaning. It is no longer a hidden thing, a private transaction between the priest and God. It is an open, shared mystery of new life, in which both priest and people gathered around the holy gifts which are Christ's Body and Blood find, as St. Augustine says, that it is the mystery of themselves which they receive, the Gospel of their own new life in Christ, as bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.

Or again to move from the sphere of worship to that of doctrine, we may consider the linked questions of the Church as against the individual, authority as against freedom in the Christian life. Here again it has been assumed for centuries that the contrasted terms are mutually exclusive. Either one must have the individualism of the Protestant world, strong in its regard for personal freedom, but weak in its lack of any real corporate sense, or one must have the disciplined obedience of an authoritarian Catholicism, strong in its massive, its monolithic order, but weak in its disregard of the conscience of the individual. This dilemma has confronted us at every level. At one point we can see the heart searching of the Christian intellectual trying either to maintain his faith and life in isolation from the Church's common tradition, or to stifle his questionings in face of a coercive authority. At a more work-a-day level we can see in parishes and local congregations an apparent choice between highly disciplined, authoritarian groups on one side which seem hardly to encourage any individual life or thought, and on the other groups which lack any real cohesion, where we all do and think "what we find helpful".

But indeed, again the antithesis is false. The glorious Gospel of God contains and reconciles the two, authority and freedom, society and the individual. The Church is neither a democracy, an aristocracy, nor yet a monarchy. It contains within itself elements of all three, while itself transcending all human forms of polity. It is the family of God in which all share a common life, and find

their perfect freedom in obedience to the will of the one Father. And this reconciliation of common life and personal freedom, of a sense of community and respect for the individual ought to be finding expression in parish churches up and down this country.

And this truth too is one that is being rediscovered and worked on anew in the coming together of the broken bones of Christendom. Here, for instance, is a report published by a Commission of the World Council of Churches*. It is the work of a group of theologians for the most part drawn from the classical Protestant traditions, though with the participation of Anglicans and Orthodox, a group which has come together to study the meaning of our common life in the Body of Christ. The book reveals the fact, still too little appreciated in this country, that within the World Council of Churches deep, serious and painstakingly honest theological thinking is going on. It shows how theologians of differing traditions are being drawn by common prayer and study, not to abandon what is positive in their own initial positions, but to see it in a fuller and more balanced setting. The whole of the first part is almost a meditation on the reality of the Church, the body in which Christ is being continually formed anew by the action of the Holy Spirit. Here is no attempt to find a superficial unity by way of compromise with truth, but a real rediscovery of the place of the Church in Christian life, and a recognition of its authority received from Christ through the Spirit, to preach the Gospel to every creature. It is, in a sense, a rediscovery from within Protestantism of the truths for which Catholicism is commonly thought to stand.

And now on the other side, let us take a Roman Catholic work, also the product of a number of writers, also published this year and urgently relevant.† On this side too we find no glossing over of differences and problems, no attempt to hide the great stress laid on "auctoritas" within the Roman Church, nor the central place which the Papacy holds within it. And yet at the same time we find signs of the revolutionary developments in Roman Catholic theology which during this century seem to have made possible a new vision of the Church, not only as an authoritative society, but as a communion of free men united in the life of Christ. Here again old doctrines are not changed or discarded. But they are placed in a different context and seen in a different light. In this way some of the most intractable

* *One Lord, One Baptism.* S.C.M. Press, 1960. 6s.

† *Le Concile et les Conciles.* Editions du Cerf. 1960.

of differences between Roman Catholics and other Christians, the doctrine of the Papal Supremacy and of Papal Infallibility, appear less entirely impassible and final. For when the position of the Pope is seen to be that of first among the many Bishops of the whole Church, and when the teaching about his infallibility is linked closely with the infallibility of the Church, based upon Christ's promise to be with his disciples to the end of the world, a great many of the objections which are rightly raised against popular Roman Catholic apologetic fall to the ground.

Of course, I am not saying that the difficulties are over, that we are all just about to find that we agree with one another. What I am saying is that a book like this one, which reveals that the old spirit of arrogance and isolationism no longer holds sway, which shows that there are Roman Catholics who are really listening to and understanding what other Christians have to say—such a book gives one substantial ground for hope; for hope for Christian unity not only because it is God's will, but because at this present moment God seems to be showing us ways in which we may be able to fulfil his will.

For an Anglican, it need hardly be said, there is a special significance in what is going on. For many of the things which in our own tradition we have been groping towards, the possibilities of reconciliation for which we have always wished to stand, seem now to be coming to pass on the larger scale of Christendom as a whole. But beyond even that, what is most moving, most exciting of all, in this whole work of prayer and study and action for Christian unity, is the sense of new possibilities, of a new vision of the wholeness of Christian truth and life, which comes as the separated brethren, children of the one Father, find that despite their divisions they are still members of one family. In his introduction to his *Letters to Young Churches*, J. B. Phillips says that in translating the epistles "again and again the writer felt rather like an electrician re-wiring an ancient house without being able to turn the mains off." It is a similar experience which must be had by anyone who reads widely in the literature of the ecumenical movement. Connections are being made; the current is beginning to flow again. And in this amazing and unmerited actitivity of the Holy Spirit drawing Christians together within the Body of Christ, we may see part of God's answer to the chaos and despair, the fears and disillusionments, the hopes and unrealised opportunities of this our moment in history.

The Next Step

M. A. REARDON

At the end of this year 1,500 people will meet for a fortnight in New Delhi at the Third General Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Already people are asking "What's the use?" The cynics will perhaps transfer to the Church the phrase of Sir Winston Churchill, "Jaw-jaw is better than war-war!", thereby suggesting that nothing really constructive can come out of big conferences and committees. After all, it is not generally the leaders of the Churches who stand in the way of unity. It is the rank and file. To prove that one has only to look at the failure of the Anglican-Presbyterian conversations in Great Britain. Official representatives of the two denominations gathered together in conference and produced their report. Whether it was a good or bad report was almost irrelevant, since what caused it to fail was primarily bigotry in Scotland and widespread indifference in England. In Scotland the popular press raised the traditional warcry, "No bishops!" and not even the best proposals could have withstood the onslaught that followed. In England the report had a more dispassionate reception —only because scarcely anyone bothered to read it.

Big conferences have their value. Work in committee has also had its successes, for instance in setting up the Church of South India. Yet in South India, and in the younger churches generally, the majority of the laity and clergy see the importance of Christian Unity more easily than we do in the West. For us divisions are so deeply cut that we have forgotten even to hope for unity. For the younger churches the divisions of Christendom are a Western importation and often not understood. Conference and committee work then has its value, but something more in addition is required in the West—something which will break through to the rank and file of the laity and clergy and ministers—something which will encourage the local congregations to get to know, respect and love one another as worshipping members of their respective denominations—something which will give them a vision and desire for Christian Unity. It is the argument of this article that what is needed are Ecumenical Communities.

As one looks back over the history of the Church from St. Anthony to the present day, one sees that Religious Communities have been founded as the shock troops of the Church. They have realised among themselves in an intensive way what the Church at that time was in danger of forgetting or needed to learn. The early communities in the desert were reacting against the secularism of the Church after Constantine. The Sisters of Mary in Darmstadt, a community belonging to the Evangelical Church in Germany, were founded as an intensive expression of German repentance and reparation for the last war. Should we not therefore *expect* now to see the rise of ecumenical communities among those who see the need for Christian Unity—expecially as community life is by its nature an expression of unity?

In fact there are scores of communities which have some claim to be called ecumenical. At present many of them consist in practice or in theory (or both) of members of only one denomination. A few contain members of several denominations; and of these some tend to be undenominational (i.e. do not lay much stress on denominational differences and regulations), and some interdenominational (respecting denominational differences and regulations). Their idea of community also varies enormously. Some are based on traditional monastic lines: in some the members can be married, and they live in community only part of the time. To name only four of the better known, there are Othona in England, Iona in Scotland, Taizé in France, Chevetogne in Belgium. These are all very different. The first is led by an Anglican, the second is basically Presbyterian, the third is a monastery started by a Reformed pastor with the three traditional monastic vows, the fourth is a Roman Catholic monastery and has a particular concern for unity with the Orthodox. Some of these and similar communities started with an ecumenical aim; some have found themselves confronted by ecumenical problems only because members of more than one denomination have joined them. More and more of such communities are springing up all over the world, and they show signs of exerting more and more influence. Parallel with them are appearing in some places Group Ministries. These are Ministers' Fraternals in an advanced form, in which ministers and clergy in a local area work together as a very close team.

Are not these two parallel developments what we are looking for?

The growth of more and more Ecumenical Communities could help to rekindle the desire and vision of Christian Unity among the rank and file—especially where these communities contain a large proportion of laymen continuing their ordinary work in the world, for in this way the relevance of unity to everyday life is made more obvious. The Group Ministries could draw their inspiration from the Communities and carry their ideals into the heart of parish and congregational life. Yet there is a danger here. Zinzendorf had an ecumenical community with members from several different denominations at Herrnhut in the eighteenth century. Despite all his aims and ideals, loyalty to the community overcame the loyalty of its members to their respective denominations, and so the community eventually developed into yet another denomination. What began as a work for Unity ended in greater division. This danger still exists. In any interdenominational community there will from time to time be a tension between loyalty to the community and loyalty to one's own particular denomination and its regulations. This tension becomes particularly acute in the question of Holy Communion.

For this reason it is vital that such communities should contain people trained in theology who can advise them and help them to develop on the right lines. Moreover there will be much that these theologians will learn by living in community with members of other denominations. The study centre of the World Council of Churches at Bossey, in Switzerland, has existed for nearly 15 years. Each winter some 40 different theological students and young ministers from various countries and denominations spend $4\frac{1}{2}$ months there studying and worshipping together in close community. This is probably the most widely inter-denominational community that exists; and even in such a short time one learns much that one would probably never learn merely from conferences and committees. It is the experience of many who have attended these courses that for the first few weeks there is a honeymoon period when the only thing that seems to matter is that the Holy Spirit is present blessing the community life. (This experience can also be gained by attending certain house-parties or conferences.) Then gradually more and more the depth and reality of our divisions begin to dawn on the students. Finally after four months one begins to discover that there is a deeper unity beneath our theological, liturgical and other divisions. One begins to discover that the discussions, which had seemed so

difficult and fruitless and full of misunderstandings, are just starting to bear fruit. In other words one realised that the Holy Spirit is present not only as a static and benign observer, but he is working dynamically in the hearts and minds of all and he is beginning, just beginning, to disclose a deeper and deeper synthesis. Then the course is over and the community breaks up. If communities, containing several members trained in the theology of their respective denominations—as well as laymen carrying on their everyday work in the world—could have a permanent existence, they might exert an influence not only in waking up the rank and file to the necessity of unity, but also in bringing new insights into Christian theology, worship and life.

* * * *

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* * * *

OUR COVER

MARRIAGE: On 1st January, 1961, the scarlet woman to a black Protestant. The honeymoon will be spent in heaven.

The Unity of The Church:
An Eastern Orthodox View

T. Paul Verghese

To speak of Church doctrine involves no mean hazard for an Eastern Orthodox Christian. The things of God do not bear democratic discussion, and as Gregory of Nazianzus said, "Not to everyone, my friends, does it belong to philosophize about God; not to everyone—the subject is not so cheap and low—and I will add, not before every audience, nor at all times, nor on all points; but on certain occasions, and before certain persons, and within certain limits."

The doctrine of the Church being the central mystery of the Christian faith, one is bound to overstep these wise patristic limits in a discussion this brief and this casual on such a profoundly paradoxical theme. It can then only be a brief confession of faith—not a challenge to controversy.

"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (Eph. 5:32). She is the Lord's Spouse and Body. As Spouse she is distinct from the Lord, but as Body she is inseparably one with Him. In Christ all of Christian humanity is bound together as one person, and the process which began at Pentecost is still going on. Its end is the "Perfect Man", the *anèr teleios* of Eph. 4:13, an end which requires that the Body of Christ becomes built up by the One Spirit working through the various ministries of the Church—apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and educational (Eph. 4:11). But the Perfect Man which is the Church will emerge in his fullness only at the end of the historical process. The historical process itself is however directed by the Spirit towards this end; history is a *katantesis*, a process with an end. The central element in the *katantêma* (end) of history is the emergence of the Church.

The attainment of this end, however, has two prerequisites, according to the Ephesian Epistle: the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, and the filling up of the full appointed measure of The Perfect Man's stature. (Eph. 4:13).

The core of the first element, the unity of faith and knowledge

of the Son of God, is the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist, the sharing of the one incarnate life of Jesus Christ—not mere dogmatic uniformity. The universal Church's participation in the life, death and resurrection of Our Lord is realised in the Eucharistic sacrifice. In it the redeemed humanity, comprising those now on earth and those who no longer live in the physical body, offer themselves in thanksgiving and adoration to God the Father, in the Son through the Holy Spirit (cf. earlier form of the Doxology), in union with Christ's eternal sacrifice and receive in the Body and Blood of Our Lord the very life of God which enables us to live the Divine Life in history. Both faith and knowledge are concomitants of the Eucharistic act. The Christian life of self-sacrificing service to mankind is its consequence and unvarying manifestation. It is through this Eucharistic relationship to the Trinity that we become "renewed in the Spirit in our minds and put on the New Man created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. 4:23-24).

The second element, the filling up of the full appointed measure of the Perfect Man's stature, is also an activity of the Holy Spirit through the life of the Church. This filling up is not merely the baptizing of a certain pre-assigned *number* of human beings—this may well be part of it—but a historical expression of the multi-phased goodness of God (Eph. 3:10) through the Spirit-engendered life of unity in diversity of the Church. It is the fullness of the *quality* of the Divine life rather than mere numbers or even the representation of all differing ethnic, national or cultural traditions that characterises the fullness of the Perfect Man. It is something which occurs through the faithful life of the Church in varying periods of history, under differing circumstances, of diverse nations and peoples, all united in the one life of the incarnate Christ.

As prerequisites to the attainment of the end, these two constitute the essence of the life of the Church considered as a process with an end.

The Orthodox would claim that they have maintained the first element intact, while, according to them, the Western Church, both Roman and Reformed, is not in historical continuity with the faith and knowledge of the Apostles. This is a claim which thinking Orthodox make with a great deal of humility, for they are at once aware that while they may not have added to or subtracted from the faith and knowledge, they have significantly failed in bringing

out the fruits of the Eucharistic life. And this is a frighteningly culpable failure, one which calls for the deepest repentance. And they are bound to concede that while the Western Church has erred in faith and knowledge, the quality of her life has frequently manifested the righteousness and true holiness which is the mark of right faith and knowledge. It is therefore with truly painful anguish that the Orthodox insist that the West, both Roman and Reformed, return to the true faith in order to find real unity with the One Church. We confess that we have been unfaithful in our life, but not in our faith and knowledge, and in making this statement we do not feel that we are being dishonest.

* * * *

The Church is Christ's Body. He has only one body, the body which He took unto Himself from the womb of the Blessed Virgin. It is this body which manifested the life of God in history, and which was offered to God the Father through the death of the Cross, was buried, rose again and ascended into heaven. It is into this body that the disciples were incorporated at Pentecost and continue to be incorporated from time to time ever since. There is only one such Body into which men and women can be incorporated, and this Body cannot be divided. All the sacraments, including Matrimony and Holy Orders are actions taking place within this Body, the Eucharist being the central one. Only a very small portion of this Church or Body is now on earth, but each local congregation manifests the fullness of the Church.

The Perfect Man is the redeemed humanity united with the Incarnate Christ by becoming members of His Body, or to use other metaphors, by becoming branches of the Vine that is Christ, or living stones in the Temple of God which is His Body. And this is the Church, the corporate community where the Spirit unites all to Christ and to each other without losing the individuality of each. The unity of this Church is not a human achievement, but an act of God, in creating it through the Incarnate Christ and the Holy Spirit.

In its visible manifestation on earth, the unity of the Church has two marks, namely participation in the same Eucharist, and communion with one universal episcopate. No single bishop can be the focus of unity for the Orthodox, and submission to the Patriarch of

Constantinople or any other Patriarchal See is not the crux of unity. Each bishop is the focus of unity for his own flock, united with them in one faith and one Eucharist. The Bishops are all participants in one universal episcopate, and are united to each other also by the same faith and participation in the same Eucharist.

Unity then is the unity of the flock around its bishop and the bishops among themselves. When the Orthodox look at the Church of England, while they discover much that is wholly acceptable to them, they find two fundamental difficulties, which stand in the way of participating in a common Eucharist with them.

The conversations held in the past between representatives of the Churches of England and Russia on various occasions* reveal areas in which the Bishops of the Church of England, at least from the Orthodox point of view, do not hold to the faith of the One Church. The fundamental difference seems to stem from differing conceptions of the nature of the Church, the details of which are beyond the scope of this article.

The second difficulty centres around the question whether the flock is usually united with the Bishop in faith. It would appear to an outsider that radically divergent, and from the Orthodox point of view, clearly un-Catholic teaching and practice seem to be allowed in the Church. Even granting that the faith of the Bishops is reasonably Orthodox (which, as pointed out above, cannot at present be granted), there is no reason to believe that the diocesan flock is united with the Bishop in faith.

An equally crucial difficulty is created by the Eucharistic practices of the Church of England. For understandable historical reasons, but without proper excuse for their continuation even after their erroneous nature has been seen, the Order of Communion of the official Prayer Book maintains a doctrine of the Eucharist which appears inadequate to the Orthodox. It lacks proper explicit reference to the participation of the Church in heaven in the oblation and the communion. It also seems to fail in the understanding of the Eucharist as a sacrifice in union with the eternal sacrifice of Our Lord. While the present writer has many friends in the Church of England who hold to a truly Catholic doctrine in these matters,

*See e.g., the excellent summary report of one such conversation: Herbert Waddams (Ed.), *Anglo-Russian Theological Conference, Moscow, July* 1956, London, The Faith Press, 1957.

the fact that the official manuals and formularies sometimes contain erroneous or inadequate teaching does constitute a serious stumbling-block. And while one may be entirely wrong on this subject, the feeling is indeed strong that what is being taught in many parishes is not the Catholic faith.

All this is not to be seen as a negative criticism of the Church of England, and cannot be answered by pointing out some of the more obvious failings of the Orthodox Church. These difficulties are pointed out in the conviction that a frank but humble setting forth of one's real thinking can only be helpful, and not harmful, to the end of history, the manifestation of The Perfect Man.

The main difficulty is not a mere question of the validity of the orders. It is one of unity in faith. But the seeking of this God-given unity is the inescapable task of all who have been called of God in Christ, be they Orthodox or heterodox. Where we have failed in charity we must repent and make amends. And while the realisation of unity still seems such a frustrating end to pursue, charity and repentance alone can bring us together to find that unity which stems from Him Who is the Lord of all and not from the success of our paltry and faltering efforts.

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The Roman Catholic concern for unity in Europe

RUTH SLADE

Some people are inclined to think that the Roman Catholic Church has stood completely aside from the ecumenical movement of the past fifty years. But in reality recent Popes from Leo XIII to John XXIII have repeatedly encouraged Catholics both to pray and to work for the cause of unity among Christians. Furthermore, both the world situation and the kind of studies undertaken recently by Roman Catholic theologians. have encouraged Catholic concern for Christian unity.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Pope Leo XIII repeatedly gave his attention to the problems of reunion. He was convinced of the part which prayer must play in the movement towards Christian unity, and so he asked Catholics to dedicate the days before Pentecost to prayer to the Holy Spirit for the reunion of Christendom.

After the first world war, Catholics in Western Europe came into closer contact with Eastern Orthodox Christians because of the Russian emigration which resulted from the Communist revolution. Already in 1917 Pope Benedict XV had founded in Rome a Pontifical Institute for the study of the Eastern churches, and in 1924 his successor Pius XI appealed to the Benedictine Order to help him in working towards reunion with the Eastern Orthodox. The Pope wanted all Benedictine monks to pray for unity, and he wanted some monasteries to dedicate themselves to the study of Eastern Christianity and to give special hospitality to the refugees from Russia. The Pope also asked these monasteries to help Catholics in the West to come to know and appreciate the heritage of the Christian East, and to be more concerned about Christian unity.

After both the first and second world wars, in a world torn apart by divisions and threatened by destruction, Catholics shared with other men an intense desire for unity and brotherhood in all spheres of life. This made them see more clearly the need for prayer and work for unity among Christians. They came to realise that those things which they hold in common with other Christians are more important

than those in which they differ. Their interest was stimulated, too, by the efforts made towards unity by Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant Christians. In 1949 an official Roman document recognised that these efforts on the part of non-Catholic Christians were undertaken "under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit", and asked Roman Catholic Bishops to promote and supervise ecumenical relations between Catholics and other Christians in their dioceses.

At the same time Roman Catholic theologians were giving increasing attention to Biblical studies; this meant that they were better prepared to understand Protestants, whose theological language is almost exclusively Biblical. They also began to make a special study of the theology of the mystical Body of Christ, a study which was, of course, full of ecumenical implications. Here a very important question is that of the way in which, from the Roman Catholic point of view, baptised Christians separated from Rome share in the life of the Church, both as individuals and as communions. While believing that essential unity already exists in the Roman Catholic Church, Catholics have become increasingly aware of the tragedy of Christian divisions and conscious of an ever-deepening desire for the full restoration of Christian unity.

The present Pope John XXIII came to know Eastern Orthodox Christianity well during his earlier work in Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece, and the cause of Christian unity is especially dear to him. He has said that "if God has permitted him, and no other, to be elected at this time to the see of Rome, it is certainly for the sake of unity that He has done so". When in January 1959 Pope John decided to call an Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church, Christian unity was certainly one of his main concerns. As he said about that time: "We are not trying to decide who was right and who was wrong. Responsibility is divided. We only say: 'Let us unite, let us finish with divisions'." This year, at Pentecost, Pope John set up a special secretariat, with Cardinal Bea as president, to deal with relations with non-Catholic Christians in preparation for the Council. This, he said, "was to show our love and concern for those who bear the name of Christian, although they are separated from this apostolic see, and so that they too can follow the work of the Council and find more easily the way of return to that unity for which Jesus Christ prayed so earnestly to His Father."

It is thus with the encouragement of recent Popes, that Roman Catholics in many European countries have shown themselves concerned to work for Christian unity. In Germany, for instance, the Jesuit theologian Max Pribilla and others were already writing on ecumenical subjects during the nineteen-thirties. In 1938 Mgr. Max Metzger founded the Una Sancta Brotherhood to encourage prayer for Christian unity and contacts between Lutherans and Roman Catholics. As he said: "The disunion of Christendom today contradicts the purpose of Our Lord and is a stumbling block to the world; to overcome these divisions is the task of every disciple of Christ." During the Nazi regime the many Catholics and Protestants who resisted official doctrine and practice in Germany were drawn closer together by their common struggle and sufferings. Father Metzger himself was imprisoned and finally executed in 1944. After the second world war the Una Sancta movement which he had founded extended its activity and now there are many groups of Roman Catholics and Protestants who find their regular meetings of great value. German Roman Catholics have also tried to help towards understanding by the foundation of the Möhler Institute at Paderborn for ecumenical study.

In France, the Dominican priest Father Yves Congar published *Divided Christendom* in 1937; it was the first of an important series of books which Roman Catholic theologians devoted to ecumenical subjects. The Dominican centre *Istina* was founded in Paris by Father Dumont for the study of the Eastern Orthodox churches; later it extended its scope to cover all ecumenical subjects, and to publish an ecumenical review. In the south of France, Lyons became the home of the movement of prayer for Christian unity associated with the name of the late Abbé Couturier. This French priest saw prayer as the first essential in a movement towards Christian unity, and pointed out that all Christians, while remaining fully loyal to their own communion, could unite in a common prayer—that of Our Lord Himself—"that they all may be one". Abbé Couturier's well-known formula suggested that we should pray "for that unity which Christ wills, to come by the means which He wills". This phrase was welcomed not only by Roman Catholics but also by Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant Christians.

In Belgium Cardinal Mercier of Malines was deeply interested in the problems of Christian reunion during the nineteen-twenties,

and he welcomed a group of leading Anglicans who went to Belgium for theological discussions. Cardinal Mercier's attitude can be summed up in his own words: "In order to prepare for unity we have to love one another, and in order to love one another we have to know one another, and in order to know one another we have to be prepared to meet one another." The Benedictine monasteries of Chevetogne in the south of Belgium and *Vita et Pax* in the north were founded in response to Pope Pius XI's appeal to the Benedictine Order for monasteries which would dedicate themselves especially to work and prayer for Christian unity. At the Belgian Catholic University of Louvain several theologians undertake ecumenical studies. For example, in 1955 Canon Thils published a doctrinal history of the Ecumenical Movement which was deeply appreciated by non-Catholic Christians as well as by Roman Catholics. The university has welcomed Orthodox theological students from Greece.

In Holland, as in Germany, the war years stimulated contacts between Roman Catholics and Protestants. There are now fourteen discussion groups for ecumenical study between priests and pastors held every month or so in different parts of the country. In Italy the centre *Unitas* was founded at Rome in 1947; directed by the Jesuit Father Boyer, it publishes an ecumenical review which appears in Italian, French and English.

On the international level, the Catholic Conference for Ecumenical Questions was set up in 1952, with Mgr. Willebrands as its secretary. It collaborates closely with the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. Mgr. Willebrands was previously appointed by the Dutch Bishops to supervise ecumenical work in Holland on the Roman Catholic side, and he is now the secretary of the Christian Unity commission set up under the presidency of Cardinal Bea in preparation for the Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church.

Thus Roman Catholics on the continent have been concerned to work for Christian unity in many different ways. As one might expect, this concern has helped to bring about a real change in the general atmosphere of relations between Roman Catholics and other Christians. Today they are able to unite spiritually in Our Lord's prayer for unity, to learn more about one another by study and personal contact, and sometimes to co-operate in various fields of work.

Especially during the Universal Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, from 18th to 25th January, Roman Catholics feel themselves spiritually united with other Christians in the prayer of Christ: that they all may be one. Father Michalon continues the work of Abbé Couturier in Lyons: last year, in preparation for the Week of Prayer, he sent out eight hundred thousand prayer-leaflets, and complete or partial translations were made in Holland, Spain, Sweden and Denmark, as well as in countries outside Europe. Other Roman Catholic groups also prepare literature for the Week of Prayer. Leaders of the World Council of Churches have recognised that the Roman Catholic insistence on the part which prayer must play in drawing divided Christians together has stimulated them to think and do more about this.

True prayer is accompanied by humility and charity, and thus creates a climate in which divided Christians can fruitfully meet and learn to know each other. For example, in January of this year a Roman Catholic parish in Paris arranged with a neighbouring Protestant parish a joint programme for the whole of the Week of Prayer; members of the two parishes were able to eat, study and pray together.

On the theological level, too, Roman Catholics and other Christians are coming to know one another better. For example, in 1956 a Jesuit presented a thesis on the work of the Swiss Calvinist theologian Karl Barth at the Sorbonne; Karl Barth himself was present when the thesis was defended. Several other Roman Catholic theologians have also studied Barth's theology closely. They have found a surprising measure of agreement between their own position and that of Karl Barth on the very important subject of justification by faith, a question which at the time of the Reformation seemed to fix an unbridgeable gulf between Catholicism and Protestantism. Many other crucial theological points are being studied by Roman Catholics together with Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant theologians. This is certainly helping to dissipate prejudice, and to clarify both basic agreements and also points of difference among Christians for whom the phrase "One Lord, one faith, one baptism . . ." is both a reality and a reproach.

But it is not only among theologians that ecumenical understanding is growing. Many Roman Catholic periodicals give regular news of Protestantism, Anglicanism, Eastern Orthodoxy and of the

World Council of Churches. In Brussels a series of study-days was arranged last winter, to give Catholics the opportunity of learning about the doctrine and practice of other Christians. It is becoming common for conferences of the Young Christian Workers, of teaching nuns and many other Catholic groups, to take ecumenism as a theme for study. In the international field, increasing numbers of Catholic organisations keep themselves informed about developments in parallel Christian bodies; for example, this summer *Pax Romana*, the International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs, was able to accept an invitation to send a group of observers to the conference which the World Student Christian Federation held at Strasbourg.

In many continental situations Roman Catholics find that they can work together with other Christians. Several examples can be taken from Holland. In 1954 a Roman Catholic and a Protestant prepared a Biblical atlas between them. In 1955 four Roman Catholics and four Protestants collaborated to produce an encyclopedia of Christendom. In 1958 the Protestant and Catholic youth groups of a Dutch village worked together, encouraged by the local priest and pastor, to make an exhibition showing conditions in under-developed countries; the visitors who came to it gave money in aid of a leper camp. For three years running Roman Catholics and Protestants in Rotterdam have prepared a passion-play together during Lent, while in at least twenty Dutch towns carol festivals are organised jointly at Christmas. Sometimes a priest and a pastor arrange to hire a cinema and show a film together; afterwards both of them comment on it in a way which they hope will improve ecumenical relations. For example, this was done at Leiden in 1955 in the case of the film *Martin Luther*. In 1959 Roman Catholics and Protestants prepared an exhibition on church architecture at Nymegen. Catholics and Protestants took advantage of the big flower-show at Rotterdam this summer to produce together a special exhibition to emphasise the fact that the beauties of nature are created by God.

Sometimes pastoral needs are the occasion for common action. In post-war Belgium there were numbers of Russians, some of them Roman Catholics but many Eastern Orthodox. Catholics and Orthodox worked together to give them a prayer-book and elementary religious instruction approved by the authorities of both

Churches. In Germany a tradition of mutual help has grown up. Protestants and Catholics provide hospitality for each other on the occasion of large assemblies; thus in 1959 when the Lutheran *Kirchentag* was held in Catholic Munich, a Danish Lutheran Bishop and his wife stayed with the Roman Catholic Cardinal Archbishop. Similarly when the *Katholiekentag* was last held in Berlin, a predominantly Protestant city, many Catholic delegates were welcomed into Protestant homes.

Thus many Roman Catholics on the continent are praying for Christian unity, learning more about other Christians and joining in common action with them where they can. They long for Our Lord's prayer to be more fully realised: "that they all may be one . . . so that the world may believe . . ." In spite of remaining difficulties and tensions, it is true to say that there is an increasing desire for unity, and a new atmosphere of friendship, understanding and co-operation between Roman Catholics and other Christians in many continental countries, especially in Germany, France, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland. Divided Christians are recognising that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit they must prepare the ground for His action, which alone can heal Christian divisions; we have every reason to believe that this movement for Christian unity, characterised by understanding, co-operation, love and prayer, will continue and increase in the future.

* * * *

Dr. Ruth Slade (Roman Catholic), of the Institute of Race Relations and Louvain University, has made a special study of the Congo.

Look Back in Charity

A Roman convert speaks his mind

STEPHEN WILLINK

It is related—albeit in no inspired writing—that a party of Anglicans, newly arrived in heaven, was being shown round the abodes of the Blessed by St. Peter. Towards the end of their conducted tour, having gazed their fill at the sights beloved of hymnodists—Austin and Zachary, for example, having "still their songs to sing"—they came finally to a high-walled enclosure. One by one they were escorted up a ladder to the top and peered cautiously over at the throng within, while their guide anxiously begged them to keep the strictest silence. Arrived at a safe distance, he mopped his brow and said:

"We have to be *very* careful there. You see, those are the Roman Catholics, and they think they're the only ones here."

To me the most pleasing feature of this tale is that it was told by a Jesuit at an Anglican gathering. An enterprising Rector had this bright idea: instead of the usual, and rather precariously bonhomous, "panel" of Unity Week speakers, he cajoled his parishioners into attending a series of weekly meetings, at each of which a representative of some other denomination could talk informally about his own Church and answer questions. O rare vision! For once, away from the hothouses of university and theological college, in an ordinary parish, speaker and listeners could be seen quietly getting down to business; for once Truth had for her votaries not shareholders, but servants.

We all know that occasions like this are unusual. It is also no secret that the main obstacle to increased discussion and understanding is the attitude of the Roman Catholic authorities in this country. This attitude is often compared unfavourably with that of Catholics abroad, and particularly in France and Germany, where a kindlier and more brotherly spirit breathes; many Anglicans, I fancy, look with affectionate admiration on the Catholic Church abroad, while regarding the English Papist as a perverse and alien product.

The present article is an attempt to set in order some random and personal observations on this theme. I speak as one who, after eighteen months in an Anglican theological college and a subsequent, rather painful, period of indecision, was finally received into the Roman Church a year and a half ago. This action, which I have not ceased since to regard as the most sensible in an otherwise ill-regulated life, has not at all lessened certain stoutly-rooted Anglican aversions and hostilities; above all, I still become impatient with the "Oh-they're-just-invincibly-ignorant-Protestants" attitude, the refusal to take non-Catholics seriously as Christians, the unreadiness to listen with humility.

I have in fact discovered, in the course of the last eighteen months, that a little effort and attention can often reveal, beneath the most intransigently ultramontane surface, a more liberal and genial frame of mind; perhaps some priest who has previously shown all the symptoms of bored distate when speaking of Anglicanism, suddenly unbends to admit that Anglicans too worship the same Christ and are allies. One such experience led to a radical alteration in the draft of this article. I had written a paragraph about the Irish clergy, praising them for their pastoral diligence and devotion to duty, but ending on a sterner note: "All too often" I wrote, "they care little about the non-Catholic simply because he is not a member of their flock and therefore none of their business. If only they would remember, 'Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold. . . .'" And then last Sunday our local priest, an excellent man and an Irishman, devoted most of his sermon to the Archbishop of Canterbury's visit to Rome, told us all to stop scoring points off our Anglican friends, and ended by pinching my quotation from St. John!

Having thus seen my anti-Irish squib effectively dampened, I must nevertheless say this: the Irish element in English Roman Catholicism tends to produce a somewhat inward-looking type of Christianity, a concentration upon a well-tried devotional routine, which in itself works against the growth of contacts with other Christians. I suspect that if a Roman Catholic congregation were invited to hear an Anglican speaking about the Church of England, their reaction would not be "How dangerous! We shall hear all sorts of heresies", but "How useless! We know what we believe and what to do about it, and all we want is to be left in peace". This, rightly or wrongly, I take to be an example of "Irishness".

When an Irishman becomes a bishop, the combination is particu-

larly dreaded by the ecumenically-minded (it is commonly thought by Anglicans that all, or most, of our Bishops are Irish; this is not so). Various things may be said about this thesis. One obvious point is that the Bishops are almost invariably chosen from the secular clergy—a limitation that automatically deprives the Hierarchy of some of the best minds in the Church. With the notable exception of Archbishop Heenan, the Roman Catholic Bishops do not appear to make a strong public impression or project an image of themselves as spiritual leaders. Administrative matters, and especially the glorious folly of the Catholic Schools programme with all its attendant financial worries, weigh heavily on them; the business of the Diocesan Curia is punctuated by calls to confirm, ordain, and dedicate or consecrate new churches. Meanwhile the scholars are toiling on, Karl Barth is producing his six-hundredth opuscule and the World Council of Churches has issued a further two-volume report; small wonder if the Bishops find it hard to "keep up with the latest trends."

But when all the excuses have been made, it must still be said that the Bishops are over-cautious. The withdrawal some years ago of the Roman Catholic representatives from the British Council of Christians and Jews was symptomatic of a deep, irrational repugnance towards sitting at the same conference table with other Christians, even in cases where no danger of compromise or "loss of face" could possibly be feared. There is an almost pathological terror of communal prayer with non-Catholics. When the War Damage Commission brought Anglican and Roman Bishops face to face, the Anglicans repeatedly tried to open the proceedings with prayer; these dogged attempts, and the various ruses devised by the Romans to counter them, make a very good story; but such cloak-and-dagger stuff is all rather discouraging. The same caginess operates over Unity Week meetings; the Vatican has in principle approved the corporate recitation of such prayers as are common to the various confessions represented at the meeting; but in many English dioceses it is as much as one can do to extract permission for the Lord's Prayer.

Some blame the Irish, and some blame the Bishops; but everyone blames the converts (or "perverts", as we are rather ungently described by the more outspoken). This seems to me an unfair stigma. On the whole converts have a good record in the field of

controversy; Newman was, and remained in his controversial writings, essentially a peacemaker; Ronald Knox was inflexibly courteous and thoughtful towards non-Catholics (an Anglican friend of mine, who knew him well, recalls how Knox asked him to serve his Mass—an invitation which my friend reluctantly declined, because he felt his Latin to be inadequate); among living converts, Fr. Henry St John, O.P., is a shining example of a man who has devoted himself for many years to the patient drawing-together of separated Christians.

We are a very mixed crowd, and have come by a variety of roads to what we believe to be the truth; it is useless to suggest that one can pin down and dissect some strange thing called a "convert mentality". Many have an image of us as disgruntled creatures, for ever writing to the *Catholic Herald* envenomed letters about the C. of E. "Thank God!", we are supposed to say, "I shall never return to *that* pig-sty, now that I have found my Father's House." While such letters do occasionally appear, a much more common type of correspondent is the one who misses some feature of Anglican life or worship, and suggests its incorporation in Roman Catholic practice. There are, for instance, the well-merited complaints about the manner of conducting our funerals and weddings (above all "mixed" weddings), at which there is hardly ever any allowance made for the fact that the non-Catholics present simply cannot understand what is going on. There are even, every now and then, the rather pathetic pleas of those who long for the psalms and hymns of their youth, and beg the liturgical experts to devise something on the lines of Choral Mattins to assuage their nostalgia. On the wider question of "looking back in charity", of the attitude one is to take towards one's own Anglican upbringing, I should say that the correspondence columns agree with the experience of ordinary conversation in showing that most converts are deeply grateful to the Church of their birth and upbringing, regarding it as the immediate source of many graces received and as the teacher from whom they first learnt the love of God.

Yet I cannot entirely shrug off the accusations of bigotry that are made against converts. It must always be true that the act of submission to Rome, however gradual the approaches may have been, marks a moment of discontinuity, and makes the convert in some way other than his previous self. It is likely that he will try to protect himself against that old self by becoming "more Catholic than the

Pope"; in particular he may seize upon those aspects of Catholic faith and practice that are most alien to his previous milieu, such as the devotion to the English Martyrs (Campion and the rest)—"At least they can't mistake me for an Anglo-Catholic *now*." I remember telling a convert clergyman that I still kept a number of Anglican devotional works—including such treasures as *Lord I Believe* and *Straight Course to God*—among my bedside books; he didn't exactly look shocked, but he said, rather reproachfully, "Oh, I should find that impossible, *after all I've been through*." I felt that he had unconsciously cast upon himself the mantle of the persecuted recusant, and that to read an Anglican book would be, for him, an act of apostasy.

On a recent visit to Paris I mentioned this episode to a learned French Dominican, himself a convert; he said it reminded him of St. Remi's famous advice to Clovis: *Brûle ce que tu adoras, et adore ce que tu brûlas*! Poor advice, he commented, even when the things to be burnt were the crude symbols of a discarded paganism; disastrous, when they were the very foundations of one's Christian consciousness.

This French visit was in every way a refreshing and heartening experience. People go to Paris for many reasons, but surely the most enduring attraction of that fair city is the primacy it gives to "la vie intellectuelle"; ideas, in great gusts, course through the streets and the salons, are debated by fierce-looking men on buses, are scrawled tempestuously on the back of Metro tickets. No one would dream of asking in Paris whether this or that topic is a "safe" topic for discussion (how commonly that word and its wicked brother "dangerous" emerge from English episcopal mouths!); if it is a topic, then it is discussed, *quoi de plus simple?*

Prowling around in search of the French ecumenical spirit, I found plenty of good copy. I went often to the Church of St. Severin (a name already well known to assiduous PRISM readers), and in conversation with the priest on duty—there is always one on hand in the sacristy—I learnt that the Community there holds regular combined meetings with the local clergy of the Eglise Réformée to discuss the strategy and tactics of evangelism in the parish . . . The hospitality of the Mission de France seminary at Pontigny is gratefully remembered by many Anglican clergy who as students stayed there, and returned to their theological colleges with travellers' tales of Roman Catholics who had actually treated

them as *Christians*. . . . At Taizé, where there is an Iona-style Calvinist community, the local Bishop told the confirmation candidates that he himself took no credit, and nor should they, for the renewal of Christian faith and practice in the district; "for this grace", he said, "you must thank the Protestant brethren of the Taizé community; their prayers and good example have worked wonders among you."

Before my visit I had feared to find, along with this wholly admirable friendliness, a certain measure of muddled thinking and half-knowledge, especially about Anglicanism. It is often said that the Abbé Portal, and others of the Roman participants in the Malines talks, knew only the extreme Catholic wing of the Church of England; and there are undoubtedly many French Catholics still who have heard something about Nashdom, Cowley and Mirfield, and say, "Of course, you Anglicans have just the same beliefs, and just the same Mass, as we do." I was also somewhat perturbed about how I myself should be received, in view of the following story that has been going around: an Anglican clergyman made an appointment to see a French Bishop, and was kept waiting in an ante-room for an unconscionable time; the Bishop at last appeared, and after a few moments of conversation exclaimed, "My dear fellow, I'm so sorry I left you hanging about out there; I thought you were one of Godfrey's chaps."

On both counts I found that my fears were groundless; those I spoke to showed that it is quite possible to look at Anglicanism with interest, admiration and even affection, without any loss of loyalty to what we regard as the one and indivisible Catholic Church. One meeting stands out in my mind—I was advised to get in touch with the editor of a fortnightly magazine called *Informations Catholiques Internationales*, but as he was on holiday, I met the assistant editor, M. Jose de Broucker, instead. Like all the editorial staff, he is a layman; he has a number of young children, with whom he goes off on nomadic holidays, preferably in the remoter parts of England (this year it had been Somerset and Dorset, about which he was enthusiastic). Both Anglophil and Anglicanophil, he was none the less delighted to hear that I had become a Roman Catholic. He gave me a sumptuous lunch, and sent me away with copious back-numbers of his publication, which I regard so highly that I cannot resist advertising it (the address is 163 boulevard

Malesherbes, Paris 17e, and six months' subscription—that is, thirteen numbers—will cost you just under £1, including postage). Each fortnight there is a long piece entitled "Dossier de la Quinzaine", a detailed study, by a team, of some important topic. In the mid-January number of 1959 "Les Anglicans" were under the microscope, and a magnificent photograph of the Archbishop of Canterbury adorned the front cover; in fourteen close-packed pages an astonishing amount of fact and comment is assembled. The well-read French layman should now know about "le Père Southcott à Halton", and "C. O. Rhodes, organisateur de la très 'libérale' *Modern Churchmen's Union*", about South India and Disestablishment and the 1928 Prayer Book; there are pictures of Convocation, and Anglican "worker-priests"; there is (naturally) a quotation from PRISM, on the subject of "part-time priests"; there is a well-informed paragraph on the selection and training of ordinands (which even mentions Brasted), and above all there is an extremely sympathetic study of the "Anglican ethos" under the agreeable heading, "Le génie anglais au service de Dieu."

I see no sufficient reason why this sort of thing should not happen over here, but I must sadly admit that it does not. Happily there are signs that something of this gentler spirit is beginning to make itself felt, not only in the Religious Orders, which have long had an honourable record in the matter, but also among secular clergy and laypeople, and in the popular Catholic press. The *Catholic Herald*, notably, gives considerable space to articles on Anglicanism and ecumenical topics, and does its best to provide information and comment without polemics. The forthcoming General Council, despite the uncertainty which surrounds its exact purpose and agenda, has been providing an excellent peg upon which to hang such articles, as well as getting a lot of unlikely people interested in the Eastern Church—a new horizon indeed for many who had previously turned their gaze no further afield than Lourdes and Fatima.

Canterbury's visit to Rome has provided a new buzz of excitement and hope. Patrick O'Donovan's article in the *Observer* gave a remarkably judicious summing-up of what might and might not be expected to result from the meeting, but the most telling comment came from the *Catholic Times:* "Things can never again be quite the same." And to rub in the point, millions of viewers saw a discussion on television between the Archbishops of York and (Roman)

Liverpool which was a model of benign summitry. Now, surely, the larger absurdities in our dealings with each other will be seen to be as foolish as they are.

On the points of deep division there will be no quick agreement; yet there is a Christian courtesy, and a readiness to believe that the other man is sincere and honourable, which can bend even our separations to the service of truth. Meanwhile, so much can be done to show the world that we are allies in our love for the one God. Anglicans could cease to speak of us as an "Italian Mission", and we could preface our Catholicism with the appeasing word "Roman" (we are not ashamed of it, after all). Roman Catholics might well take note of Anglican biblical scholarship; already in France they have put their imprimatur on C. H. Dodd and Oscar Cullmann, and —who knows?—one day we may see the same translation of the Bible read by English-speaking Christians of all denominations, instead of the present arrangement whereby we Romans "officially" use Douai and Knox, but peep at the R.S.V. or the "Bible de Jerusalem" when we really want to know what the writers said.

The dialogue continues, and we cannot tell what new forms it may take in the coming years. But it must remain a dialogue; the belief of Roman Catholics that they enjoy the possession of assured truth within the infallible Church does not excuse those who try to use it as a bludgeon against unpalatable ideas. It may be more blessed to give than to receive, but to come to the ecumenical debate in the posture of one who has everything to give and needs to receive nothing, is not at all blessed. Each party to the discussion must labour to go beyond the other in humility and generosity, praying always that they both may grow in knowledge and in sanctity. And all this, not because of the "scandal of competition in the mission-field", not because "a divided church cuts no ice with the working-classes", not because "we must present a united front against Communism"—these things are as straw in a gale. We must learn to love one another for love's own sake, because God has willed the love and has made us its ministers.

* * * *

Stephen Willink, aged 28, *Eton and Trinity, now teaches in a Comprehensive School in Putney.*

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New Delhi

David M. Paton

The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches will be held at New Delhi from 18th November to 6th December this year. Official delegates will number 625, of whom the Church of England has 16—the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of Chelmsford, Bristol and Rochester; the Dean of Liverpool, Professor Alan Richardson, Fr. F. B. Dalby, S.S.J.E., and the Revs. J. W. Roxburgh and H. Cooper; Sir Kenneth Grubb, Mr. Peter Kirk, M.P., Dr. Kathleen Bliss, Mrs. M. B. Ridley, Mr. O. W. H. Clark, Miss Mollie Batten, and Mr. J. W. Lawrence.

There will be official observers from the Church of Rome and from the Russian Orthodox Church; many other Orthodox Churches are of course full members with official delegates. The total fraternal participants, including advisers, fraternal delegates, youth delegates, World Council staff members, etc. will not exceed 1,500. This Assembly should be a more manageable body than the much larger Evanston Assembly in 1954, and the weather will also be much more conducive to hard work.

The business of the Assembly is basically threefold:

1. It has to seek to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches —Churches which know we should be one Church although we cannot at present see how to become one Church—in this middle of the twentieth century. This will be done principally under the headings of the Church's *witness* to Jesus Christ; its *service* of the world in His name; and its search for the *unity* which He wills. The "annotated agenda" on these themes which will be the starting-point of the work of the first part of the Assembly are being presented in very much simplified form in the pre-Assembly booklet which is being widely distributed in the member Churches, and will be in the hands of the Secretary of every P.C.C. by the time this article is read.

2. To consummate the integration of the International Missionary Council with the World Council of Churches. "Edinburgh 1910" was a World Missionary Conference, it appointed a Continuation Committee, which became the International Missionary Council—Christian co-operation, Christian unity started in "the mission field"

where history was less of an emotional force, and the perils of division much more obvious (though not perhaps any more real). Other "ecumenical" results of Edinburgh developed more slowly, and resulted in 1948 in the formal establishment of the World Council of Churches in 1948. What Edinburgh began in one whole and has since developed in a measure in separation is now to be re-integrated into one whole, when the I.M.C. becomes the W.C.C. Division of World Mission and Evangelism. But there is a crucial question: Will this mean that the missionary impulse is finally smothered by ecclesiastical organisation (and it cannot be said that Churches as wholes have always been committed to mission)? Or will it mean that the penny finally drops and it is recognised in theory and practice that "missions" are not a hobby for those who like that kind of thing (as others care for bell-ringing or brass-rubbing) but that *the Church is mission?*

3. The Assembly has also to plan in some detail the work of the World Council for the years before the next Assembly, to determine the right organisation to get the work done, and to fix the budget to pay for it. The Churches tend to ask the World Council to do more things than its present staff can undertake: but if it gets much bigger it will become too big for all but the largest and richest churches to feel at ease with. There are difficult questions here, and not only here—questions that will tax the united wisdom of the member churches, and which will only be rightly answered if we keep steadily before us the One Lord of the one Church in the one world—questions which in the end have in a sense to be answered by the common judgment of the faithful at large, though the technicalities are committed to their delegates.

The Assembly is for two quite diverse reasons unpredictable.

For the first time, we shall not meet inside "Christendom" but in New Delhi, India. Round us will be not the familiar sense of the Christian world, of many churches, a large Christian community, and the practice of Christianity by our national leaders. Christians are thinly scattered in North India; our environment will be the secular humanist world of Mr. Nehru, the militant Hinduism of much Indian life, the Asian readiness to lump Christianity and imperialism together. To say, as the theme of the Assembly proclaims, that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World in that context is not quite the same as saying it in most of our pulpits. No one can tell in advance what difference will be made by this, or by the large increase since

1954 of Asian and African delegates from Asian and African member Churches (for example, the newly-formed Anglican Church of East Africa.)

Secondly, we do not know how the membership of the member Churches will respond to the massive efforts being made to get them to share in preparation for the Assembly—in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18th-29th January)—this year's theme is "Jesus Christ the Light of the World"—in use of the pre-Assembly booklet, and in gifts to the cost of the enterprise.

At this point, a writer in Church House must lay down his pen, and leave his piece to be finished by the Church at large, offering only the observation that if there be any truth in ecumenism and the ecumenical movement, it must be true for us all.

The Rev. David M. Paton is Secretary of the Church Assembly Council for Ecumenical Co-operation.

QUERIES

Dear Sir,

From time to time I have noted that PRISM speaks with loving concern and approval of the Roman Fraternities and Sisterhoods of the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus.

I become more and more certain that I have a vocation to serve the Lord in this particular kind of vocation. I am never likely to succumb to Roman fever to the point of being able to put myself under obedience to the extremes of Roman dogma, therefore I cannot go forward to fulfil this vocation until there are signs of something similar to the Fraternities developing amongst Anglicans.

In view of this I should be much interested to know if you have heard of any such development, and if so, could you put me in touch with the folk behind it?

PATRICK BUCKINGHAM

St. Stephens House.

Comment

Norman St. John-Stevas writes

The visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Vatican has opened a new phase in Anglican-Roman Catholic relations. By his imaginative action the Archbishop has created a dramatic change of atmosphere which others must now take advantage of.

From the Vatican point of view the visit was both highly welcome and a resounding success. Some English Press representatives gave the impression that the Vatican was reacting coolly to the visit, but this was quite incorrect. The Vatican certainly kept the Press at arm's length, but this was in order to ensure that the visit retained its "private" character rather than from any dislike of the visit itself. The lack of any photograph of the encounter stemmed from the same motives, with the additional one of protecting the Archbishop from any embarrassment. Not every member of the Church of England would be delighted to see the Archbishop actually in the lion's den! At the same time it was a pity Vatican protocol was not explained to the Press as this would have avoided subsequent minor misunderstandings.

The Pope clearly attached great significance to the visit and saw that every mark of honour and respect was paid to his distinguished guest. Approaching the papal apartments he was saluted by the Swiss and Noble Guard: the Pope was at the door of his library to greet him: the interpreter was a high official of the Roman Curia: and the conversation lasted for the unprecedented length of sixty-five minutes. Afterwards the Pope referred very warmly to Dr. Fisher in his address to the Cardinals. It is clear that the Pope wishes his pontificate to be marked by a reunion or at least a drawing together of many Christians and in this process the Primate's visit has been a significant step.

The visit will greatly increase the prestige of the secretariat for Christian Unity which has been set up in Rome under the presidency of Cardinal Bea. This is an entirely new departure in the Roman Catholic Church and means that for the first time there is an organisation in Rome, backed by the highest authority, working for re-union amongst Christians. Cardinal Bea himself is a man of great charm and warmth and a renowned Biblical scholar. He has had many contacts with Protestants and is ably aided by a churchman, Mgr.

Willebrands, who has had many years of experience in the ecumenical movement. The Archbishop's visit to the secretariat was of great importance as establishing a direct link for the transmission of views between Lambeth and Rome. In England the work of forwarding the secretariat has been entrusted to Archbishop Heenan, of Liverpool, a man of firm views but also of great charity, who has already made his friendliness towards the Church of England abundantly clear. Anglicans will find in him an understanding friend. Meanwhile Catholic ecumenicists will be heartened and encouraged by the visit and will renew their efforts to promote reunion. The decree of the Holy Office of 1949 encouraging Catholics to co-operate in social matters with those of other faiths and allowing certain prayers in common is likely to become more than an academic document. A new chapter has opened in Church relations. May the Holy Spirit ensure that the best is made of it.

* * * *

Canon Mortlock writes

There can be no doubt that the Archbishop of Canterbury's visit to the Pope was a resounding success on every observable level. Wherever he appeared in Rome during the forty-hours of his visit his demeanour was that of a man in bouyant spirits. At the Embassy party given by our Ambassador, Sir Ashley Clarke, to meet the Archbishop he enjoyed animated conversation with many of the highly placed ecclesiastics—as well as those of lower degree —who lent brilliance of colour to the scene.

Before the Archbishop's arrival newspaper correspondents were commenting on the chilly attitude to the visit which seemed to be adopted by the Vatican. It has since been explained as no more than external restraint proper to the occasion and matched on the other hand by private courtesy. None the less the contrast was startling. On the day before the visit an official of the Vatican, addressing a group of journalists, said that it would be a private audience "in the lowest category." The phrase left the hearers ill-prepared for the warmth with which, as they learnt later, the Pope had received the Primate.

Meanwhile, Dr. Fisher had been smiling from the covers of popular magazines festooned on street kiosks. His evident success was not only with Pope John but with the Romans in the street also.

R.D. writes

Most PRISM readers, no doubt, will have spent a happy post-prandial Christmas reading *Summoned by Bells*, and won't, therefore, need reminding that this is John Betjeman's long, blank-verse auto-biography that reviewers in the weekend press have been kicking around in recent weeks. There are all sort of nice things to say about this, but ultimately I think the true Betjemaniac, like myself, must confess to some sense of disappointment—partly because compared with some of the short poems there isn't enough emotion to bite on, partly because what happened to J.B., at the hands of his peculiar nanny, at his prep school and at Marlborough are so exactly what we expected all along *had* happened. If you believe, what is true, that beating someone is closely akin to assaulting them sexually, you may well feel that it is high time the matter of corporal punishment at school and in prison was talked about by more reliable opinion-formers than female magistrates.

Others will be delighted to recognise their friends (Gerard Irvine, John Edward Bowle) and enemies so casually mentioned.

To me the most revealing two lines are:

"What seemed to me a greater question then
Tugged and still tugs: Is Christ the Son of God."

Here we have a greatly respected Anglican layman, the apotheosis of that man-in-the-pew who is the target of all the sermons and instructions and booklets on the faith that were ever issued by enthusiastic professionals, doubting, then and now, if Christ is the Son of God—not about the Real Presence in the Eucharist or the Descent into Hell or the Immaculate Conception or even the Authority of the Bible; none of the matters which occupy the twelve short chapters of each manual of the faith but the one matter which they all presuppose and therefore ignore—and the one which most of us *soi disants* lay believers haver about from cradle to grave—just, *was* he? If churchpeople of all levels and complexions are united in their doubts on this central question, doesn't that at least put churchmanship quarrels where they belong? You can make a man a churchman, a priest and he may never, fully, technically be a Christian. Is belief in the divinity of Christ at the beginning or the end of the Christian way. Apologists have generally assumed it to be at the beginning. To put it the other way round would be a far more effective way of doing things.

R.D. writes

Mr. Jack Bowles says we gravely misrepresented the unilateralist viewpoint. What we were after, actually, was not the taking up of a viewpoint but an attempt to think through to the truth. And here we followed the unilateralists all the way to the point where, if Mr. Bowles's letter may be taken as authoritative, they say:

"We must not pretend that the consequences of continuing with our present 'defence' policy will be anything less than a nuclear war, if not by design then by accident."

Thereafter they advocate that some country (ours, to be specific) "skilled in international diplomacy" should unilaterally disarm as an incentive to the two great powers (a) to disarm themselves, (b) not to drop H-bombs on the unilateral disarmer.

I think this is a fair account, and it raises the following questions:

(1) What is "our present 'defence' policy"?

(2) Why is "defence" put into inverted commas? Because unilateralists believe it is not defence at all, but attack? Or why?

(3) Why should nuclear war, whether by design or accident, be a necessary consequence of our receiving nuclear weapons from a nuclear power? (compare the non-use of gas in the last war and note the fact that our policy no longer includes the independent manufacture of nuclear weapons).

(4) How skilled are we, or is any other second-class power in international diplomacy?

(5) Unilateral renunciation "could completely change the situation, and not necessarily for the worse". What does this mean? If it changes for the worse, what justification is there for pursuing it in the first place?

(6) Would not an aggressor drop H-bombs on a unilaterally renouncing country just so long as there were any sites there of strategic importance he wished to obliterate?

(7) Even if either of the great powers dropped bombs on a unilaterally renouncing country they could still drop H-bombs on each other and the final result would not be much different?

C.M. writes

One of the most heartening signs of the movement towards unity since its acknowledged birthday at Edinburgh just over fifty years ago is the fact that it has outgrown its diphthong; and soon to write oecumenical, with its overtones of preciousness and unfamiliarity, will be as out of date as oeconomics is. Much of the discussion about the movement, published to celebrate its jubilee, is now therefore chiefly interesting as showing the change from tentative wary approaches to our present confident interest in one another, at any rate at summit levels, if still inadequately in the cushioned pews of local churches. *Beginning at Edinburgh*, which shows all this, has been written by Hugh Martin. When I telephoned Edinburgh House to check his denomination, nobody was sure till they had consulted their records. There's ecumenicity for you!

Talking of the 1910 discussions about overseas missions, he quotes a phrase about "an army of well-qualified native evangelists and leaders". It does sound dated. It should, however, be read in the context of the reports, now available, of the Canterbury conference on "Theological Education and World Mission" (see PRISM, November). Several speakers there concentrated on the revival of the Oriental religions and how Christians should treat them. Kenneth Cragg's knowledge of Islam enabled him to show the link between significant events in our religion and the *Ayat* of the Qur'an (we can, evidently, no longer be arrogantly Western and write Koran)—the idea of nature as a realm of signs. Similarly, an Indian contribution suggested that the revived social thinking of Hinduism, that started with Gandhi, as well as its refurbished theology, should be first recognised, then approached friendlily, as a response to the impact of the Christian gospel. Again, the Rev. Daisuke Kitagawa's exposition of Christianity's limited effect on Japan, where nationalism came early, showed that there is still a lot of thinking to be done about how our religion adapts itself to changing societies, thinking particularly relevant for Africa.

It is good to read this, not least because it keeps any joy that we are big enough to have about the ecumenical movement from lapsing into self-satisfaction. Even coalescent Christianity is still an unpopular and difficult religion. To say that this is "the tension of the Cross" does not excuse our indifference to other faiths.

R.D. writes

Things have come to a pretty pass, one might say, when an ex-Editor of PRISM becomes an Inspector of Theological Colleges. Who has been at work on whom, one would ask? Yet such was the case and the first inspection was duly carried out a week or so ago at a very distinguished college. It was only after I heard myself saying "After you, Father" that I started kicking myself. Before that, what with being disarming about PRISM (which wasn't very necessary, half the students thinking I was a paid official of C.A.C.T.M. and the other half being far too busy passing exams to do much more than browse through an occasional number) and catching up on the latest and highest-up ecclesiastical chit-chat ("so Mervyn turned round and said . . .") I had no time to wonder who ought to be inspecting whom. And indeed what exactly were we expected to find—a harem in the vestment chest? Gin under the beds? Unholy and even un-BCP religion? What we did find were forty hardworking, humorous, critical and lively young men intent on learning their future trade, learning it thoroughly and seriously. They included an ex-Major who had all but instructed me at O.C.T.U.; several other married men with children on the way; an Indian and a student from Barbados. The main complaint (before they learnt that I had nothing to do with C.A.C.T.M.) was the size and distribution of their grants; certainly many of them had a tough time spending their vacations lugging parcels in post offices, worrying about continuing to be a drain on home exchequers, about the cost of travel, the impossibility of buying books and, of course, the problem girl friends (but then who doesn't worry about that?) A few new ones chafed a little at the necessity of leading a disciplined life which inevitably involves a severe rationing of evenings out. None had anything but praise for the staff, the food, the spiritual direction, and all seemed to be patiently but eagerly waiting for the day their ministry should begin. It would, of course, have done Paul Ferris a power of good to have spent a couple of days there, although we must not set too high a store by the overriding need of convincing him that our Church is full of superb people. Certainly it did me a lot of good. If C.A.C.T.M. could decide to extend its range of inspectors to include all Anglican churchmen who start snarling at their Bishops and committees, a good deal of uncreative energy could be syphoned off and theological colleges would survive.

The Gospel Miracles

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In the course of his ministry Dr. Wallace has found that the miracle stories of the Synoptic Gospels raise and answer urgent questions about the Church's policy and future that face us today. He has found, too, that they vividly reflect the problems and situations that arise for the individual within the life of the church. Readers of this book will find themselves put in touch with the results of scholarship and with the basic trends of modern theology.. **Price 15s**

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Price 10s 6d

Oliver & Boyd

Review

St. Francis de Sales: Selected Letters. Translated with an introduction by Elisabeth Stopp. Faber and Faber. 25s.

Someone once complained after having had a certain elderly bishop to stay for the weekend, "But you said he was a saint! Why, we've had the best weekend we can ever remember having: we were expecting someone very dull and he turned out to be completely human". But of course: the odour of sanctity is not the mustiness of a disused church hall but rather a combination of the effervescence of an alpine breeze and perfume worth nine guineas an ounce. Thus, if one takes the Letters of St. Francis de Sales and expects to wallow in the sanctimonious mush of a Patience Strong, one is likely to be disappointed.

The advice which the saint gives to those who are under his direction is at once down to earth and full of the same sort of homely epigrams that our Lord Himself, if the parables are a guide, must have used. We can sense his patience in dealing with the Baronne de Chantal, who must at times have been rather a nuisance. From the saint's replies, it is possible to reconstruct the general tone of her own letters, and it is not altogether surprising to learn that she was the grandmother of that tedious precursor of Paul Slickey, Madame de Sévigné. Yet his advice, his chiding, even his occasional sternness, is a mirror of the love of God portraying the paternal care of a shepherd towards a silly sheep. Moreover, her later letters tell the result of his direction, for Mère de Chantal, one day to be canonised, is a very different person from the zealous and a little over-scrupulous widow of earlier years.

Dr. Stopp's translation brings out the vigour of Francis' own style ("I would not bat an eyelid to gain the whole world"), though for an Anglican the almost studied avoidance of the words of the Authorised Version in biblical quotations which mars so many otherwise admirable Roman Catholic works is regrettable and sometimes irritating.

Those who have the care of souls will learn a great deal from the example of the saint, while the general reader could do worse than make a careful study of the direction which he gives to those whose problems are the same as our own.

George Austin.

Letters

ABBEY: MUSEUM OR CHURCH?

Dear Sir,

Some of what James Portman has said in his article "Abbey: Museum or Church?" in the December issue of PRISM is quite true, and widely felt. More widely than deeply, I suspect, for even righteous indignation has its fashionable topics.

No doubt Mr. Portman feels deeply about the subject, but I greatly dislike his method and the angry sarcasm of his tone. He concentrates his efforts on shocking not our religious but our aesthetic sensibilities, which we slightly more "kulchured" Anglicans cherish so dearly in our own complacent way. He makes his appeal to the snob in us. He presents us with pimples and cameras and the tourists themselves as if such things just didn't exist within the Kingdom. He seems to suggest that the bulldozers of "true religion" should sweep some offending tourist trash out of the west door. (Does this mean that the devout few will then withdraw to the austere luxuries of meditation, thanking the Lord that they are not as these others, gawkers, gapers, profaners of the temple?) Our Lord did indeed drive the money changers out of the Temple: they were cynical profiteers. But when crowds of common people flocked to Him out of sheer animal curiosity and sensation-seeking, He accepted them gladly and preached to them of the Kingdom. Vulgarity never dismayed Him. "Suffer little children to come unto Me" includes "snot-nosed brats" and "pimply, gum-chewing adolescents". The paunchy Americans with cameras slung about their necks are exactly the Zacchaeus types with whom He might rather choose to dine than with our churchmen of delicate sensibility.

I do not deny that the Abbey sadly lacks an atmosphere of prayer and that some change is very much to be desired. I do not deny that the topic needs discussion and thought. Let us by all means be ardent ecclesiastical young angries. But pray let us beware of becoming ecclesiastical young snobs.

Moreover, we can't seriously believe that the only solution is an either-or: that either Church or tourists must get out. Such a divorce would imply that the two are irreconcilable, which is nonsense. The Church's whole mission is to reconcile, and here she is faced with a special challenge and a special opportunity to spread the

Gospel. Let services for tourists continue: the more services the better, as they may help to make it more like a church and less like a church bazaar.

Yours faithfully,

Oxford. R. F. HALL.

Dear Sir,

In his admirably incisive article, "Abbey: Museum or Church?", Mr. James Portman seems to have made one slight mis-statement, unless his experience has been markedly different from mine. Having built up for us a picture of the Abbey with chancel transformed into a tearoom and chapels sprouting hamburger stands, he writes: "It could happen someday. It is exactly the sort of thing which has happened to some of the historic churches in Russia."

With little doubt Mr. Portman's travels have extended more widely than mine. But it may be worth recalling that the Kremlin cathedrals in Moscow and the Holy Wisdom church in Kiev—undoubtedly some of the most historic churches in Russia which remain secularised—do not present anything remotely like Mr. Portman's picture of our national museum of the future. For reasons which I would not presume to be able to probe to their depths, these churches are kept in the most spotless condition, and the state is spending very large sums of money in restoring their matchless icons and keeping their fabric in repair. Visitors tend to walk round quietly, the men with uncovered heads. Conversation is somewhat subdued, certainly more so than in our Abbey. Most remarkable of all, in some cases the sanctuary, though devoid of any religious object, is not so freely entered by the public as is the rest of the building. But visiting priests were given a special invitation to look round.

I am very far from suggesting that the aim of the Soviet state is anything other than the final obliteration of all traces of the christian Gospel. But it seems to be the case that the Russian people as a whole, at any rate those (and they are many) who visit the museum-churches, have an innate sense of reverence for what is in fact a holy place.

One may wonder how many of our own people would treat Mr. Portman's Abbey-museum in a similar way, even without the

teas and hamburgers. Or indeed how many behave in it with a like reverence while the altars are still there.

Yours sincerely,

MARK TWEEDY, C.R.

Mirfield.

WORKER PRIESTS . . . PROFESSIONAL

Dear Sir,

I wonder if Tony Williamson is prophetic enough in his stimulating article in the November issue (only recently received here). The heart of his prophecy I take to be on page 22 and in particular would like to comment on, "Meanwhile the men in industry and commerce are just cogs in the vast profit-making system; they have no essential status or personality and their purpose in life is to provide more profits." This raises two points.

First, what's wrong with profits anyway? Everybody works for profit, and nearly everybody would hold shares if they were able. The trouble is that they are often badly distributed. Everybody should be a capitalist, the more the merrier. It breeds responsibility. Common ownership generally does not. Isn't all this cavilling at profits something that should be buried and one of the reasons why the Labour Party is in the doldrums? There is a parable on talents and profits.

Secondly, and much more important, and it may have some bearing on the above, the lack of workers' status and personality in industry is due to the Church's failure to baptise industry (add science, commerce etc. throughout this letter) into any theological scheme of life. The workers' lack of personality (denied by Michael Routh in the September PRISM) is because industry lacks it, assuming that by personality we mean some connection with "made in the image of God."

Now is modern industry etc. according to the will of God, or of the devil, or has it just happened? This is the crucial question, and I believe most emphatically it is a sign of Christ's first coming, a sign of the Kingdom, which is never fully realised on earth. This should not surprise us in an age called A.D., except that we have become accustomed to confine Christ's work so narrowly to churchy things. The joy is that the Lord cannot be contained in our theological prisons—"and they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.

Amen". So ends St. Mark, and if we allow this extension of the meaning of signs, should we not be in a better way to understanding something of the importance of the priesthood—the real "backroom" boys of the modern world, and so receive more vocations? To argue this point requires a book, but it has been largely done in A. F. Smethurst "Modern Science and Christian Beliefs" and other books.

They are only signs, like the miracles in the Gospels, but they do "heal". They make possible a vast increase of population, more souls for God to love, and if quantitatively there is more suffering, so there is more joy. The majority of men have always had it pretty bad. What is new is that there is now an appreciable group of ordinary folk who have it so good. These signs force us to wrestle with the unity of mankind, outmoding racialism and nationalism, making of all nations one new race. We may of course lose this battle for unity, just as we may blow up the world. But somehow we haven't yet, and I believe in A.D. Christ controls things 90 per cent in the long run. Individual nations, like us in South Africa, may come under his judgment and go under, but God's purpose will be done, albeit imperfectly, in the end. One could enumerate many benefits of these signs: turning the curses of the Fall into blessings—making of the whole earth a garden, not only for man, but for the Lord to walk in; bringing outer space into dominion; freeing the god-given creative and co-operative impulses in man etc. I would be prepared to argue that the average factory worker in England of today is more of a person than the average tribal African or even of the average English workman of the 1930s.

Much has and is being done, and all honour to those like Tony Williamson who do it, to get alongside the unchristianised working man, to love him and missionise him, but little progress can be made until we have baptised the modern industrial set-up, and freed our imaginations to see industry's potential in a world acknowledged to be owned, controlled, and judged by God. Our first enemy is secularism, not materialism, which pervades nearly all our education, and is only made more secular by the inclusion of "religious knowledge" as a separate subject.

I may appear to be asking for the moon—and in A.D. I'm not sure we shouldn't! I am arguing for a new prophetic approach of our theology of this world, as the arena in which Christ is increasingly giving signs of the next. We must be theologically aggressive. We've got to think and act big as well as small. It's a matter of the

imagination, the lack of which may well be our main modern failure in personality. Imagination's power to get things moving may be judged from the phenomen of Communism, which is a Christian deviation. We need a Christian Karl Marx at this stage.

But that is not all. We are up against our arch enemy—pride. Karl Marx could enlist it. We have to try to reject it, and must start with giving 90 per cent of the credit to our Lord for our industrial achievements. Incidentally this might make it easier for the worker, as he would then realise he was not living in the boss's world, but in one showing the signs of someone with whom he has a lot in common—a fellow worker—and how!

And of course if the church is identified with the boss's world, the worker will be suspicious of it. Yet the priest must get him and the boss to church in so far as that is part of the humiliation necessary for all of us to begin to acknowledge the true significance of A.D.

Yours sincerely,

Transvaal. (Rev.) I. R. CARRICK.

HOUSE OF LAITY

Dear Sir,

You refer in Focus for December to "the clergyman . . . who had the nerve to send out a circular (re elections to the House of Laity) suggesting that it was not a good thing to send out election addresses", since as you so rightly declare, members of the House of Laity are "not just pawns in a clerical game." In this instance it would appear that this is exactly how they were being regarded.

In the first place, the clergyman in question was not just an individual priest uttering a personal opinion. He was a diocesan officer, an Archdeacon no less, whose responsibility it was to preside over the election.

Secondly, this official did not confine himself to suggesting what should *not* be done—which of course he had no possible justification for doing. He proposed what he regarded as a satisfactory alternative, namely that candidates who occupied any (for the most part diocesan) posts in the Church should have these enumerated on the ballot paper. This course was in part adopted, and one gentleman managed to run up a score of nine of these.

A baffled examinee is said to have replied to the question "What is an Archdeacon?" with the definition, "One who exercises archdiaconal functions". The practice recommended in this case goes beyond these.

Consider the effect of this. It meant the suggestion of a heavy bias in favour of old and trusted administrators, with a corresponding tendency to the exclusion of younger aspirants. It implied that what the Assembly most needed was what is sometimes described as the "ecclesiastical layman" as distinct from churchpeople who would bring into Church House a breath of fresh air from their vocations in the world outside. (I have myself sat in the Assembly for many years and I know how immensely to be desired it is that the ranks of the laity should not be so predominantly recruited from ecclesiastical bureaucrats and retired officers from the armed services.) Finally, it precluded those who might have strong views on the doctrinal, moral and sociological issues confronting the Church today from expressing them and asking the electors to support them. It is difficult to imagine any procedure less calculated to produce the sort of House of Laity which the Church urgently needs.

The sequel, however, is not altogether discouraging. Two of the youngest candidates among the sixteen presenting themselves refused to conform to the archdiaconal ruling and arranged for the circulation of their addresses. One of these (possibly both, but I am not sure of this) was elected.

Yours sincerely,

S.W.1. MAURICE B. RECKITT.

DISESTABLISHMENT

Dear Sir,

Colonel Madge writes (December PRISM) that disestablishment might well be very good for the *Church* of England but it would not be a good thing for *England*, and as the primary task of the Church is the conversion of England, we should remain established.

But if disestablishment is (as the Colonel often thinks) *good* for the Church of England this can only mean that it makes that church more truly part of the Body of Christ, more holy, more efficient. If it is more holy and efficient it is more likely to convert England than as at present established it is. Disestablishment, therefore, will be good for the Church of England *and* for England. Or am I mad?

Yours sincerely,

ROBIN DENNISTON.

Olney.

REMYTHOLOGY

Dear Sir,

Mr. Rex Walford, in his article you published in the December issue, expresses the commonly-held view that the problem of presenting the Gospel to people today is one of communication. In the sense in which he seems to understand it, I am not convinced, although there is a more profound sense in which it has always been true that those minds which are already closed to God cannot understand the words spoken on his behalf by the Church. This is obvious enough from the close relation which obtains between the meaning of expressions and experience: it is also clear from the incomprehension with which Our Lord himself was received.

No amount of remythology will alter this, although it may help Christians to understand a more important problem, namely one of "identity", both for themselves and for those whom they seek to serve. By this I mean the problems of the why and the wherefore of human existence, which remain even for the "religionless" man. The reason why, in my opinion, he does not listen to the "Christian" answers is not because of their "olden-time aura", as Mr. Walford suggests, but because he is committed to an attitude which is fundamentally opposed to that which is providing the answers.

One of the most interesting features of the science-religion debate is that it became sharpest at the point where clerical science was almost as much a closed system as that which it appeared to discredit. As a philosophical expression of this, logical positivism can be seen as a closed system in which religious language is strictly "meaningless". It is indeed such a positivistic outlook which characterises the religionless man of today whose thinking is done for him by those many agencies which are primarily responsible for the formation of public opinion and whose prejudices are those of the group to which he belongs. The "religionless" man bows down to experience, not authority, judges by achievement and not profession. He is not averse to closed systems as such, because their very closedness guarantees a measure of security, but he cannot accept them in a religious form because such a form does not meet his problems as a human being.

A closed system is easier to identify than to divest oneself of. Indeed one might say that it is part of our fallen nature that we should want to belong to one. It is not difficult for Christians to see that Phariseeism is closed in this sense or even that scientific positiv-

ism is: but perhaps, as Bonhoeffer has indicated, the Church has been the advocate of such a system as well, an oppressor of humanity and not its liberator. So that in presenting the Gospel today we have to fight on two fronts, both in the Christian community and in the secular world.

The advantages of closed systems are obvious. They give us security, a position from which we can understand ourselves (make for economy in mental energy), enable us to deal summarily with new ideas, minimise human relationships (this is most important) and give us a footing in the world. That Christianity has been presented as if it were such a system, I do not doubt. But perhaps Bonhoefferian Christians should bear in mind that their secular neighbour may well be committed to something which, despite obvious dissimilarities, is basically a system of the same sort.

When Christians disengage themselves from their religious system, their first question is "What now have I got that my secular neighbour has not?" Once we realise that we have not got something which must be put across at all costs, we will be somewhere near discovering for ourselves our own "identity" as Christians. For the Gospel is not the possession of the people of God but is shared by them in the fellowship to which they are called. It only becomes "good news" for us in our community with one another and in our love for our neighbour.

For the religionless man today the Christ-event is so firmly rooted in first century Palestine that he does not see its eternal significance. This is not, as Mr. Walford suggests, due to the historical gap nor to the difference in social conditions—it is due, as I see it, to his loss of transcendence. For the religious man, on the other hand, the difficulty is to see the Incarnation as a secular event. For the one Christianity appears as an ethical code: for the other, it is a religious system. It is those who are committed to such a system that are concerned to show its relevance. If I have been unkind to Mr. Walford's article, which does have a number of good points to it, it is because it strikes me as an attempt to do just this. If we have difficulty in seeing the relevance of the Gospel, our problem is one of identity not of communication. We are called I believe to renounce our religious systems, and to share in the lives and problems of those to whom we are sent, for it is in this that the good news is communicated to us, for Christ himself is present in such an encounter. Our secular neighbour may himself glimpse this, although it is a judgment

on the Church that he is unlikely to associate it with historical Christianity. And yet here is the new man.

Christianity as a religious system is fragile because God has chosen the Church as his people and the Spirit is continually at work breaking down the systems which divide the churches from one another and the world which they seek to serve. It is good that we can no longer appeal to men on the "religious premise" or cash in on religious needs. But can we see that demythologising will not help us to communicate the Christian message? Rather it will show us that our talk about God (with or without myth) must be misunderstood by the "religious" and not understood at all by the secular. For, I suggest, theological language can only be an expression of the redemptive experience and therefore it is only by grace that it can be understood.

Yours sincerely,

STUART C. BROWN.

Caledonian Christian Club.

QUERY

Dear Sir,

Can any reader put us on to some "Prismatic" occupation for the work party of a dozen or so sixteen-year-olds during the Easter holidays? We assume that PRISM is practical as well as being intellectual and we are looking for something useful to do for about a week. We should welcome any ideas.

Yours faithfully,

G. L. COUCH.

39 Ravensbourne Gardens,
Ealing, W.13.

CHURCH AND PRESS

Dear Sir,

Father Jonathan Graham's letter in the December issue of PRISM raises matters of the greatest importance for the future of this magazine, and indeed of all religious journalism, broadcasting and television. For he seems to suggest that the use of these media can result in nothing but "the diffusion of a vague familiarity with religion, without pressing the demand for crucified lives." And this he declares "is incalculably harmful and hinders the communication of the Gospel by the only authentic means."

If what Father Graham is saying is that the living of a life according to Christ, is infinitely more important than the writing of magazine articles and the devising of T.V. programmes, then I suppose that most Christians would agree with him. Certainly most of the writers for PRISM would do so, for this point has been constantly stressed in its pages. But if he really means to go on to say that it is better, safer for the Church not to use *any* methods of publicity, then we must disagree.

Throughout its history, the Church has not been afraid to take the worldly methods of the day, whether in building, music, drama or publishing, and use them in the service of the Gospel. Surely the Church should not be afraid to do so today. It is not that we have used these media too much, but that we have not always used them with sufficient intelligence and Christian discrimination. The deep impression made by the television broadcast from the enclosed Community at Talacre, gives a fine example of how such media can give a glimpse of their sacrificial way of life to millions who would otherwise be totally ignorant of it. The excellent illustrated brochures produced recently by some of our Anglican religious communities have suggested that they too have wanted to bring modern techniques to the service of God.

It would indeed be a tragedy if anyone thought that the use of modern media of publicity could be a substitute for or an alternative to "crucified lives". But it would also be a tragedy if we simply abandoned the whole world of mass communications as lying altogether "in the power of the evil one".

Yours sincerely,

DONALD ALLCHIN.

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Prayer: (3) Penitence

Sister Edna Mary, C.S.A.

Friendship is a two-sided relationship. In a man's friendship with God, it is always God who takes the initiative and the man has to respond—but does he do so?

It is unanimous Christian experience that the closer one comes to God, the more one relies on his companionship and sympathy in all the circumstances of life, the more that one ponders on all that God does for man and all the love he shows him—the more one comes to know God, the more conscious one becomes of failure to respond to his love. It is the consciousness of this failure which, for the Christian, is the essence of penitence.

There are two ways of looking at sin. One sees it as an affront to the holiness of God, as disobedience to his command "Be ye holy even as I am holy" (Lev. 11.44 etc., I Peter 1.16). Thus it was when Isaiah saw something of the glory of the Lord in the Temple, and heard the hymn to the All-Holy, that he realised with new intensity his own sin and the sin of the people to whom he belonged. It is when Gerontius sees the God for whom he so longs, he realises how utterly unworthy he is to stay in that presence, and pleads that he may be taken to some remote place of preparation. The characteristic Christian doctrine of judgment, as set out in the New Testament, is that in the presence of God good and evil are brought to the light and the sinner realises what he himself has chosen—and the closer the presence of God the clearer the revelation of good and evil and of the choice that has been made.

But for the Christian sin is not only an affront to the holiness of God, it is a rebuff to his love. Christ himself did not speak of sin as comparable to breaking the laws of the land, or even to insulting the dignity of a king; he compared the sinner to a servant who fails to recognise how much he owes to his master, or tenants who betray the trust that is placed in them, or a son who thinks only of himself and ignores his father's claims upon him. For the Christian, the measure of human sin is not so much the cloud of glory and the angelic hymns in the Temple as God the Son dying in agony and darkness.

Against that backcloth sin stands out in a new dimension. It is

seen to consist not so much in actual doing of wrong as in failure to do right—failure to respond to love with love. For those who are really trying to live the Christian life it is the failures and omissions that matter rather than the usually rather trivial acts of positive wrong-doing; and self-examination in not so much a matter of raking around for the things we have done which we ought not to have done, but an enquiry into how much more we could have done effectually to love God and men.

This puts self-examination into a new light. What a dreary process it can be! The same detailed list of faults comes up with depressing regularity—the same small irritabilities, the same little lack of charity, the same concern for people's opinion of us. We can sympathise with the woman of irreproachable character who lamented that it had been so much easier when she had had an occasional nice little murder to confess! This very repetition and triviality can be a healthy lesson in humility—but it is only part of the picture, and the whole process can savour more of stock-taking than of a living relationship. A man does not check up whether he has hurt the woman he loves, ignored her or insulted her—if he has done so he is very conscious of it; but he is concerned with how he could do more to show his love for her. So it is in prayer. If, instead of starting with ourselves, we start by thanking God for all his love for us (on the lines discussed last month), then we shall be sorry for our own ingratitude in responding so feebly to that love. Starting thus, we shall see clearly not only the things we have actually done wrong, but all our failures to do more for God—the virtues not cultivated, those grown tarnished, the places where we have slipped back on ground gained earlier, or have stood still when we should have been going forward. And if from time to time we see that we really have made more response—have grown a little in charity or patience, have given a little more thought to others and less to self, then we should recognise it and thank God for the grace he has given us to enable us to grow thus. Thanksgiving and penitence go closely together, and we do not honour the gardener by looking only for the weeds in our lives!

No friendship can thrive if one party to it consistently refuses to admit that he ever fails. This is true on the human level; how much more so in man's friendship with God, where all the failure is on man's side. Thus penitence, the acknowledgment of that failure, must have its regular place in Christian prayer.

The pattern of penitence is always the same. It is simply that of a child who goes to his mother and says "I took those cakes from the larder (confession), I am sorry (contrition) and I will not do it again (purpose of amendment); and he may well add "I am sorry that I am such a naughty boy." Confession must be specific—not because God is ignorant of our sins (any more than the mother is of her child's theft), but because until we ourselves acknowledge them to him we cannot receive the forgiveness that he always holds out to us. But at least at times, there is the need to express also a general sense of our sin and of our share in the corporate sin of the world, and here many find the words of the General Confession appropriate also for personal use. Then, having acknowledged our fault, we can express our sorrow; we can do so in our own words, or in words from the Bible, such as Isaiah's in the Temple, Peter's by the Lake, or those of the Prodigal Son, or phrases from Psalms such as 51 and 67; sometimes hymns may help, though here there is need for caution—some of the worst hymns ever written are those which encourage us to express penitence for sins we have never committed and are never likely to commit, or to say that we are earthworms when the whole point is that we are not worms or any other animals but men, who have defaced the image of God in us by our sin. At other times words from the saints may help, such as Augustine's "Late have I loved thee . . ." But as much as any kind of prayer, penitence is a matter of action as well as words, for the proof of penitence is the purpose to amend. This involves praying for grace not to repeat the sin; but it also involves care to avoid the circumstances in which we are likely to do so: it is no good praying "Lead us not into temptation" and then deliberately walking into it of our own free choice.

Although it must have its place in our "times of prayer", penitence is not something to be left to the end of the day. The husband who snaps at his wife at breakfast does not (if he loves her and has any sense) wait until he returns in the evening before he apologises, so that throughout the day both are conscious that the relationship is not what it should be; he says at once that he is sorry. So it should be in prayer—not spending the day under a cloud of unrepented sin, but saying "sorry" to God the moment that we realise that we have sinned. The closer one lives to God, the more quickly does he realise the moment that sin has impaired that communion, and the quicker he is to repent it. Then at the end of the day there is need only to

gather up those acts of penitence, with self-examination as a check against blindness or carelessness. And on the other hand, it is this regular daily self-examination in the light of the love of God, with occasional more searching examination (as in preparation for Communion, before sacramental confession, in times of retreat, before the great festivals, and so on) which keeps one sensitive to sin and so quick to realise and repent it.

Whether we think of times set apart for prayer, or of the whole day, the order is always: God first, self subsequently. It is the direction of the will to God in adoration, the consciousness of his mercies and deliberate giving of thanks for them, that lead on to the consciousness of sin and the desire to express sorrow for it. In this perspective there is nothing morbid or unhealthy about Christian penitence, but rather it is the prerequisite of peace and joy, for it is the human side of what is needed to restore the communion with God which is impaired by sin; it goes hand in hand with gratitude for the forgiveness of sin, and reliance on the power of God in future temptations.

Adoration, gratitude, penitence, peace and joy are inseparable companions.

* * * *

The International Summer Courses at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, this year are "Liturgy and Life" (3rd/15th July), "Towards New Delhi: Christ the Light of the World," (17th/29th July) and "Contemporary Christianity and the Faiths of the World," (31st July/12th August). Among the speakers are the Rev. Basil Minchin, the Rev. David M. Paton, and the Rev. Fr. M. Jarrett-Kerr, C.R.

Applications indicating (a) full name and address and diocese, and (b) which session, should be made to the Secretary of the Summer Courses, St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, Kent, England.

The programme is intended primarily for Anglican clergy and the lectures assume a basic theological background. Applications from others suitably qualified will be accepted if accommodation permits. Details of fees, bursaries, accommodation for wives, programmes, etc., can be obtained from the above address.

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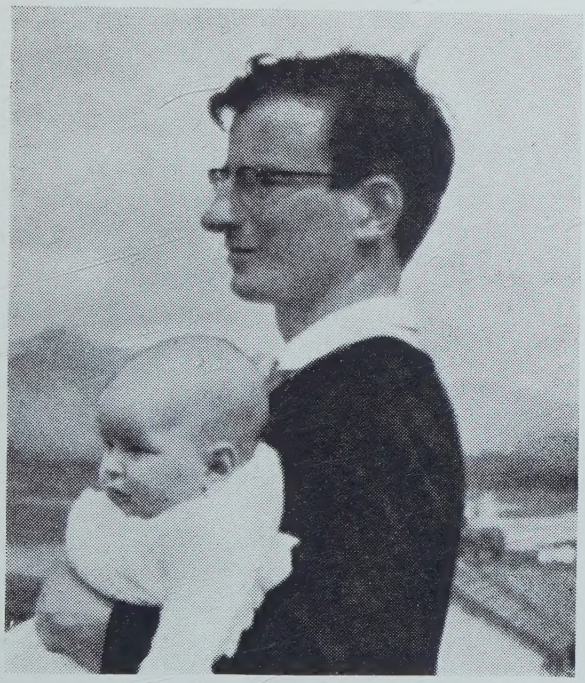

ROBIN MINNEY

Balliol and Trinity are traditionally rivals, but it was a breach of this tradition that ultimately produced PRISM. Shared digs in Jericho (Oxford) started the common thinking, when Robin (the Balliol half), dapper in nightcap and smoking jacket, began wondering how to be a Christian layman. After Oxford he tried it out first selling petrol in East Africa, but was found a couple of years later teaching in a Church primary school in Hackney, having abandoned his well-lubricated career. In his downland rooms there (these hackneyed puns minimise Robin's facility for them) the earliest numbers of PRISM were conceived. The title itself is not a pun, but flashed on the prospective editors from some Victorian chandeliers. From the first Robin's particular *forte* was his knowledge of print and production, since he had been playing at typesetting from a boy.

PRISM was conceived at 2 a.m. on 31st December, 1956, and in the four years since, Robin has changed to a doomed Central School in Lambeth, and become a husband and a father. You will find him with Penny, his literary wife, and nine-month-old Thomas (Minney-Minor) at home in their neighbourly Lambeth pied (ou deux) à-terre, papering, entertaining, helping run their parish, or pricking seedlings in the garden.

Although for years Robin eschewed the possibility of ordination, he is now one of the Bishop of Southwark's thirty-one "part-time" ordinands, with the hope at present of becoming a permanent deacon. These plans commit him at present to staying where he is, pedalling from N.U.T. branch meetings to Hebrew classes, but both he and Penny think eventually of teaching in East Africa.

Eton is not least distinguished by its eccentrics. Robin, in his suspicion of the money market, in his passion for Christian Stewardship, and in all that he does represents this; and when the Minneys go off to Africa, the Church in England will be letting go of one of its most forthright and loyal sons.

TIME & TIDE

PRISM should reach you this month on Tuesday, 2nd January. If you have been shrewd enough to order TIME & TIDE regularly from your newsagent or by direct subscription (£3 per annum; £1 10s. 0d. for six months) from the Circulation Manager, 32 Bloomsbury Street, W.C.1, you will already have read MORAY McLAREN'S article on the relationship between the CHURCH OF ROME and the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH in the Quatercentenary Year of the latter.

If you have not been so shrewd you may find last week's number in which this appeared, unobtainable.

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